

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 10-14, 16, 18, and 27-29 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A reinforcing bar connector assembly comprising:
a body having a bar seat section; and
a bar retainer moveable transversely relative to the seat section,
the seat section being adapted to receive and position a loop section of a concrete reinforcement reinforcing bar of generally circular cross-section, the seat section having an upstanding land with a loop section seat extending around the upstanding land, the seat section and the retainer having transversely extending mateable mating sliding surfaces adapted to mate, by which the retainer and seat section are progressively secured together by sideways sliding engagement of the mateable mating sliding surfaces from a laterally offset position and the retainer being transversely moveable relative to the bar seat section between a first position allowing the loop section of the reinforcing bar to be placed on the seat loop section seat ~~so that tension or compression applied to the bar is in a longitudinal direction~~ and a second position blocking removal of the ~~second loop section of the reinforcing bar~~ loop section of the reinforcing bar from the assembly ~~and at the same time blocking longitudinal movement of the bar relative to the assembly~~.

2. (Currently Amended) A reinforcing bar connector assembly for connecting together a pair of oppositely extending bars, at least one of which ~~has~~ is a ~~concrete reinforcement reinforcing bar of generally circular cross-section and~~ having a loop section, said assembly comprising:

a main body having a bar seat section; and
a bar retainer,

the seat section and the retainer having transversely extending ~~mateable~~ mating sliding surfaces adapted to mate, by which the retainer and seat section are progressively secured together by sideways sliding engagement of the ~~mateable~~ mating sliding surfaces ~~from a laterally offset position~~, the retainer being moveable transversely relative to the seat section between a position opening the bar seat section for insertion of the loop section of the ~~concrete~~ reinforcement reinforcing bar and a position blocking insertion or removal of the loop section of the ~~concrete reinforcement~~ reinforcing bar to or from the seat section, the main body having an opening, and the seat section comprising an upstanding land and a loop section seat accessible through the opening and extending around the land so that the loop section of the ~~concrete~~ reinforcement reinforcing bar may be secured to the main body when positioned on the loop section seat, the retainer being a bridging member adapted to bridge across the opening of the main body when the retainer is in the blocking position and having a rigid portion being located to be positioned between the bars in the blocking position, the relative dimensions of the bars, the main body and the bridging member being selected such that the rigid portion of the assembly is located between the bars in the blocking position to resist compressive forces which may tend to force the bars toward each other and the loop section seat resists deformation of the loop section when under tension.

3.-5. (Cancelled).

6. (Currently Amended) A connector assembly according to claim 2 wherein the seat loop section seat comprises ~~an upstanding land having~~ a curved channel into which the loop section of the ~~concrete reinforcement~~ reinforcing bar is positioned so that upon a load being

applied to the bar in tension, the land section aids in retaining the bar in position and inhibits deformation of the loop section of the reinforcing bar.

7. (Currently Amended) A connector assembly according to claim 2 wherein the retainer comprises a slidable member adapted to slide into the ~~body~~ bar seat section transversely to a the reinforcing bar inserted in the seat section, whereby the bar seat section and the retainer including the rigid portion serve to secure the retainer and thereby the reinforcing bar in position in the bar seat section.

8. (Previously Presented) A connector assembly according to claim 2 wherein the retainer bridges across the opening such that the main body and retainer have at least one of the bars located between them.

9. (Previously Presented) A connector assembly according to claim 2 wherein the assembly is symmetrical so that two identically shaped bar loop sections of separate bars may be connected together by the assembly with the bars so connected together occupying a common plane.

10. (Currently Amended) A connector assembly according to claim 9 wherein the main body has two symmetrically positioned seat sections adapted to receive U-shaped loop sections of projecting ~~concrete reinforcement~~ reinforcing bars.

11. (Currently Amended) A connector assembly according to claim 1 wherein the main body includes a retainer guideway and the retainer has a guide that travels on the retainer guideway, the guide and the retainer guideway being tapered so that the retainer is wedged in position.

12. (Currently Amended) A connector assembly according to claim 1 wherein the ~~main body includes~~ mating sliding surfaces include a retainer guideway on the main body and the retainer has a guide that travels on the retainer guideway, the guide being tapered so that the retainer is wedged in position.

13. (Currently Amended) A connector assembly according to claim 1 wherein the mating sliding surfaces ~~main body includes~~ include a retainer guideway on the main body and the retainer has a guide that travels on the retainer guideway, the retainer guideway being tapered so that the retainer is wedged in position.

14. (Currently Amended) A connector assembly according to claim 2 wherein ~~said~~ the rigid portion of the assembly is dimensioned to engage both bars mounted therein so that compressive movement of the bars is blocked, said assembly being symmetrical in side view with the body resisting tension on one side and the retainer bridging the opposite side to resist tension so that force applied to the bars is distributed evenly through the assembly.

15. (Cancelled).

16. (Currently Amended) A connector assembly according to claim 1 wherein the retainer is shaped to be wedged against the ~~concrete~~ reinforcement bar.

17. (Previously Presented) A connector assembly according to claim 2 wherein the assembly has two opposed seats for respectively receiving the looped ends of two opposed bars in confronting relation and the retainer includes the rigid portion which is dimensioned to be wedged between the bars.

18. (Currently Amended) A connector assembly according to claim 2 wherein the assembly has two opposed loop section seats defined by opposed lands having opposing peripheral surfaces shaped around the lands to respectively receive the looped ends of a pair of bars in confronting relation and wrapped around the respective lands and the retainer is wedged between the bars in the blocking position to apply an outward force to the bars and bridges across the lands applying an inward force to each of the lands tending to prevent separation of the lands when tensioned.

19.-26. (Cancelled).

27. (Currently Amended) A connector assembly according to claim 2 wherein the main body includes a retainer guideway and the retainer has a guide that travels on the retainer guideway, the guide and retainer guideway being tapered so that the retainer is wedged in position.

28. (Currently Amended) A connector assembly according to claim 2 wherein ~~the main body includes~~ mating sliding surfaces include a retainer guideway on the main body and the retainer has a guide that travels on the retainer guideway, the guide being tapered so that the retainer is wedged in position.

29. (Currently Amended) A connector assembly according to claim 2 wherein ~~the main body includes~~ mating sliding surfaces include a retainer guideway on the main body and the retainer has a guide that travels on the retainer guideway, the retainer guideway being tapered so that the retainer is wedged in position.

30.-34. (Cancelled).